



Air Traffic Control Delays

Did you know that there are between 4,000 and 6,000 aircraft operating in the National Airspace System during peak periods? This equates to approximately 50,000 aircraft operations per day. The Air Traffic Control System Command Center in Washington, D.C. manages this flow of air traffic within the continental United States.

Spirit Airlines employs Air Traffic Control Coordinators who work in conjunction with the Air Traffic Control System Command Center to help minimize the impact of delays on Spirit flights and maximize the overall use of the National Airspace System. The purpose of this joint collaboration is to ensure safe and efficient air travel for Spirit Airlines flights.

When delays do occur, Spirit's Air Traffic Control Coordinators evaluate the projected flow of traffic and in coordination with the Air Traffic Control System Command Center, implement the least restrictive action necessary to ensure you a safe and prompt air travel experience.

Air Traffic Control delays occur because the normal flow of air traffic into an airport is disrupted due to any number of reasons including: bad weather, maintenance to ground based navigational equipment, airport or runway closures, or any other condition that places stress on the National Airspace System.

TYPES of ATC DELAYS

- 1. Ground Delay Programs** - Under normal operations most airports are capable of safely accepting a specific number of arriving aircraft each hour. During a Ground Delay Program, flights are delayed by the Air Traffic Control System Command Center in order to reduce the number of aircraft arriving at the airport. This is because the projected number of arriving aircraft is expected to exceed the number of aircraft that the airport is capable of safely accepting. The most common reason for a reduction in number of arriving aircraft is adverse weather.

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- 2.** Ground Stops - Ground Stops temporarily stop traffic to an airport where the number of arriving aircraft the airport is capable of accepting has been reduced to zero. Flights that are destined to the affected airport are held at their departure point for the duration of the Ground Stop.
- 3.** Severe Weather En-route - When adverse weather is encountered, it is sometimes necessary to re-route airborne traffic around the bad weather. In this case, a large number of aircraft moves through a small part of the airspace, causing a reduction in the normal flow of air traffic. As the weather changes, the plan can be revised and, if necessary, new routings or restrictions can be issued.
- 4.** Airport Closures - Occasionally, the local airport authority closes airports. The most common reason for an airport closure is snow; the snowplows are unable to keep the runways adequately plowed.
- 5.** Runway/Airport Equipment Outages - Maintenance to ground based navigational equipment and airport construction may result in air traffic delays due to restrictions to the normal flow of air traffic.
- 6.** Military Flying Activities - U.S. airborne military forces must maintain aircrew proficiency and continually train in a wide range of military tactics. Because of these military flying activities in the National Airspace System, Air Traffic Control may need to reroute civilian aircraft around areas where military flying activities are present resulting in a disruption in the normal flow of air traffic.

We hope this information will help you better understand the process of safely flying through the National Airspace System and make your travel experience more enjoyable.

Thank you for choosing Spirit Airlines!

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